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THAW AND COOK

You can heat frozen blocks of creamed chicken or stew frozen pieces without waiting to thaw them. But pieces for frying should be thawed first. And a whole or split chicken cooks more evenly if the bird is thawed beforehand.

A 3- or 4-pound bird takes overnight or longer to thaw in a refrigerator. Keep in original package while thawing.

Cook at moderate heat.—Cook chicken from frozen storage like any other meat, at no higher than moderate temperature.

That is—simmer, don't boil, a fricassee or stew. When braising chicken in the oven in a casserole dish, use a moderate temperature—350° F. If roasting a bird, keep oven temperature down to 325° F. If frying a young bird in shallow fat, keep the heat moderate.

If thawing must be completed during cooking, don't try to speed the process by use of high heat. Allow extra time, so that the meat will thaw and cook done, all through.

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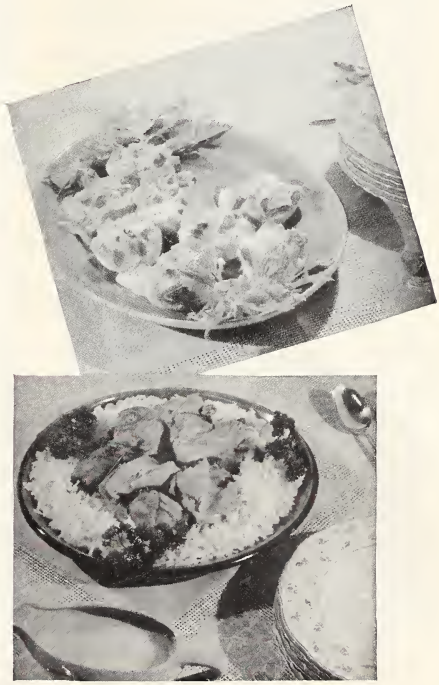
CHICKEN IN THE FREEZER



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Leaflet No 279
Formerly AIS-74

HOW TO FREEZE STEWING HENS

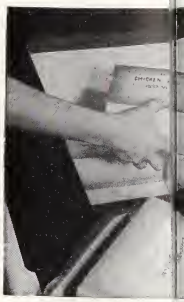
Chicken from the freezer? Yes—for those company meals, planned or unexpected, and to have on hand for extra busy days the year round. Freeze and store excess birds from your flock. Cull the low-producing and the nonlaying hens and put them into the freezer for later use.

Getting chickens ready.—Choose for freezing only healthy, plump birds—and no more than you can handle at one time. Dress and draw fully . . . with utmost speed.

Space-saving m pieces (breasts, thighs backs, necks). Legs

Divide cut-up bird into meaty pieces (breast, thigh, also leg if desired) and bony pieces (wing, back, neck). To save more space in storage, remove bone from leg.

Insert each meaty piece in a fold of cellophane, to prevent freezing together. Pack in medium-sized or small paperboard cartons, lined or covered with cellophane that can be heat-sealed.



Seal cartons with a hot. Keep cartons co are ready. Place in freezer, with space b promptly.

After cooking bony pieces, strip bones carefully to obtain many good-sized pieces of meat. Cut large pieces into uniform cubes. Measure meat.

To go with the cooked meat, make an equal amount of white sauce, using skimmed fat and stock from the cooked chicken in the sauce. The recipe for creamed chicken gives added details.

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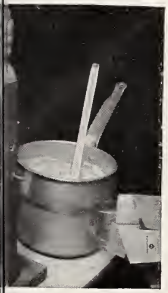

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either meaty or bony pieces. Freeze meaty pieces raw for later use in stew or fricassee. Cook bony pieces, cut the meat from bones, and use the meat to make creamed chicken for freezing and storing in the home freezer or locker.

No need to thaw frozen pieces before starting a chicken stew or fricassee. Let pieces simmer—not boil—for 3 to 4 hours or until the meat is tender.

To serve: Heat frozen chicken in a double boiler about ½ hour. Start with water warm, not hot, in lower pan, so the thawing meat won't stick. If heating several blocks, don't stack—use a wider pan.

Serving Frozen Meaty Pieces Fricassee Style

Place unthawed meaty pieces of two chickens in a kettle, cover with slightly salted water, and simmer 3 to 4 hours, or until tender.

Make a gravy from the broth which remains after cooking, allowing 2 tablespoons of flour to thicken each cup of broth. Season to taste. Reheat chicken in the gravy. (Six servings.)

If desired, add egg yolk to gravy at time of serving—1 egg yolk to 1 quart or less. Beat yolk, stir into it a small portion of gravy, return it to the rest of the gravy and mix well.

Hearty Creamed Chicken for the Freezer

Here is a recipe for creamed chicken that is definitely a chicken dish—half chicken, half sauce—not sauce with a little chicken.

First cook the bony pieces by simmering in salted water until tender. For mild seasoning add a small bag of herbs (¼ teaspoon thyme and ¼ teaspoon marjoram), if you wish. Cool meat quickly in the broth. Skim off the fat for use in white sauce. Remove meat from broth and cut big pieces into uniform cubes.

A guide in figuring amounts: You can get about 3 pints of meat from wings, backs, and necks of 6 hens weighing 5 to 7 pounds (picked, but not drawn). Adding meat from the legs will almost double this amount.

For each 3 pints of cut, cooked chicken, make 3 pints of medium white sauce. For sauce, use—

- ½ cup chicken fat
- ⅞ cup flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 3 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon salt

Heat fat, stir in flour; add broth, milk, and salt, and cook over hot water, stirring constantly until thickened. Add the cooked chicken and heat to blend flavors.

Each pint of creamed chicken makes about 3 servings.

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Getting chickens ready.—Choose for freezing only healthy, plump birds—and no more than you can handle at one time. Dress and draw fully . . . chill quickly . . . freeze with utmost speed.

Space-saving method.—Separate meaty pieces (breasts, thighs) from bony pieces (wings, backs, necks). Legs may be included with either meaty or bony pieces. Freeze meaty pieces now for later use in stew or fricassee. Cook bony pieces, cut the meat from bones, and use the meat to make creamed chicken for freezing and storing in the home freezer or locker.

Divide cut-up bird into meaty pieces (breast, thigh, also leg if desired) and bony pieces (wing, back, neck). To save more space in storage, remove bone from leg.

Insert each meaty piece in a fold of cellophane, to prevent freezing together. Pack in medium-sized or small paperboard cartons, lined or covered with cellophane that can be heat-sealed.

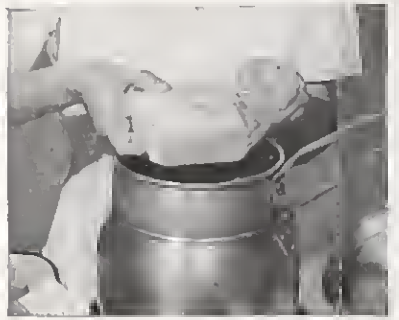
Seal cartons with an iron that is warm, not hot. Keep cartons cold in refrigerator until all are ready. Place in freezing compartment of freezer, with space between cartons. Freeze promptly.

No need to thaw frozen pieces before starting a chicken stew or fricassee. Let pieces simmer—not boil—for 3 to 4 hours or until the meat is tender.

After cooking bony pieces, strip bones carefully to obtain many good-sized pieces of meat. Cut large pieces into uniform cubes. Measure meat.

To go with the cooked meat, make an equal amount of white sauce, using skimmed fat and stock from the cooked chicken in the sauce. The recipe for creamed chicken gives added details.

Cool the pan of creamed chicken quickly in iced or cold running water. Package at once in paperboard cartons lined with heat-sealing cellophane. Freeze promptly.



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3 cups milk
1 teaspoon salt

Heat fat, stir in flour; add broth, milk, and salt, and cook over hot water, stirring constantly until thickened. Add the cooked chicken and heat to blend flavors.

Each pint of creamed chicken makes about 3 servings.

FREEZING YOUNGER BIRDS

When younger birds—broilers, fryers, or roasters—are big enough for table use, it is often economical to freeze and store them.

Prepare them carefully, chill promptly, and freeze as soon as cold.

Roasters.—Prepare bird as for cooking. Tie legs and wings tight to body to save storage space. Package chilled bird in moisture-vapor-resistant wrapping material. A flexible canvas hammock (shown above) helps to press wrapping tight against bird and prevents slipping. Fold securely, pressing to drive out air. Heat-seal the ends, or snugly tie them, or seal with cold storage tape. Tie in stockinette.

Broilers.—Remove head and feet from dressed bird. Cut along the backbone, open, and take out entrails. Cut bird in two along breastbone (shown above). Wash well, dry, and chill quickly. Place halves together with two pieces of cellophane between them. Package like roasting chickens.

Fryers.—Prepare dressed chickens for frying. Wash, dry, and chill. Insert each piece in a fold of cellophane and pack tightly in a carton or package that can be heat-sealed. Use medium-sized or small packages to suit family needs.

Giblets.—Giblets are best used fresh. If they are to be frozen, clean, wash, dry, and chill them. Put in a separate package for freezing.

WHEN YOU LABEL, PACKAGE, FREEZE, AND STORE

. . . Label.—Mark packages plainly to save guesswork. Give date and contents, such as "meaty pieces of stewing hen," or "fryer breasts." Special stamps, inks, labels, and tape are made for labeling.

Writing labels and making up boxes in advance is convenient, and speeds the packaging job. Some packages cannot be labeled after sealing.

. . . Package.—Be sure that cellophane or other wrapping materials are moisture-vapor-resistant.

. . . Freeze and store.—Keep packages of chicken in a refrigerator until all are ready for freezing. Freeze as soon as possible.

If you take packaged food to a locker, wrap in newspapers or use an insulated box, to help keep it cold on the way. Have food frozen in fast-freezing room if available, before placing in your locker.

If you have a home freezer, be sure temperature in the freezing compartment is 0° F. or lower. Place packages against freezing plates or coils, spacing them so air can move between them.

Remember that large or heavily wrapped packages take longer to freeze than those of medium size with only enough wrapping to protect the food.

After freezing, store chicken at 0° F. or lower.